



City Council Meeting AGENDA

**STUDY MEETING
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2016
5:00 PM**

MAYOR: GENE WINSTEAD

**COUNCILMEMBERS: TIM BUSSE
DWAYNE LOWMAN
JACK BALOGA**

**KIM VLASAVLJEVICH
ANDREW CARLSON
JON OLESON**

View regular meetings live or via archive at BloomingtonMN.gov, keyword: Webcast. Catch the replay on Comcast cable by tuning to Bloomington TV channels 14(SD) and 859(HD) and CenturyLink Prism TV channel 8214, the Wednesday after a meeting at 7:00 p.m. and the following Thursday at 1:00 a.m., 7:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m.

***BloomingtonMN.gov:** A yearly meeting schedule is available in the Council section. Also posted in this section are agendas (the Friday before a regular meeting), and the official minutes.*

1. CALL TO ORDER – 5:00 PM Haeg Conference Room

2. ORGANIZATIONAL BUSINESS

- 2.1. Artistry's Strategic Direction and the City/Artistry Partnership
- 2.2. City Manager Council Update

3. ADJOURN

Request for Council Action

Originator City Manager	Item Artistry's Strategic Direction and the City/Artistry Partnership
Agenda Section	Date 9/12/2016

Description

Early in 2016, Artistry executive director Andrea Specht approached the city manager to discuss strategic repositioning of the Bloomington-based arts organization. Artistry has been engaged in a strategic planning process and in recent years has made a number of changes that are transforming the organization, its artistic focus and offerings, and its financial position.

The City of Bloomington has a significant interest in the success of Artistry given its prominent role in producing theater, gallery programming, and arts education at the Bloomington Center for the Arts (BCA), and providing box office services for most of the non-profit arts organizations using BCA. In addition, Artistry is a key partner of the City's in South Loop creative placemaking efforts.

Artistry's board and staff leadership believe the future of the organization depends on its ability to develop engaging arts programming that reflects our contemporary society while honoring and maintaining some traditional and familiar pieces; attract a broader and more diverse audience to ensure growth in patrons and participants; and, continue growing a regional reputation that has produced recent rave reviews for artistic excellence. These priorities are in alignment with the City's strategic priorities for 2017-2020, particularly as they relate to Community Image and Diversity and Equity.

The transition from a traditional community theater/arts organization to a regionally celebrated and supported one will not occur overnight. Accordingly, ensuring a more predictable funding environment is critical if Artistry is to successfully navigate the next few years. Artistry believes that a "bridge" campaign to raise roughly \$1.5 million through 2020 is necessary to build the organization's capacity for marketing and development, move past break-even operating budgets, and create a working capital fund to better manage the financial volatility that is not unusual for arts organizations.

The bridge campaign proposed by Artistry is designed to help the organization move to a model where its annual operating budget is 60% earned revenue and 40% contributed (donor) revenue, and includes consideration of a supplemental cultural arts grant from the City of Bloomington to leverage contributions from individual and corporate donors.

The purpose of the discussion is to familiarize the City Council with Artistry's strategic priorities and the proposed bridge campaign and get direction on how to proceed in supporting this important community partner.

Item created by: City Manager
Presenter: James D. Verbrugge and Andrea Specht

Requested Action

Discussion

Attachments:

Artistry Memo.docx
Artistry by the Numbers 2016.pdf

MEMORANDUM

To: Jamie Verbrugge, Bloomington City Manager
From: Andrea Specht, Artistry Executive Director
Re: *Next Generations* Bridge Campaign Request
Date: September 8, 2016

Following numerous strategic planning discussions, the Artistry Board of Directors adopted the following mission and vision in June of 2016:

Mission: In pursuit of artistic excellence, we engage our region's most talented artists in work that welcomes and develops audiences and opens hearts and minds.

Vision: A diverse, distinctive, and progressive community widely recognized for making art and artists essential to a vibrant social fabric and civic life.

Our board also adopted four values, one of which is "Citizenship." For Artistry, this means being "deeply grateful for our Bloomington roots, committed to the progress of our city, and proud to make it a cultural destination for audiences throughout our region."

The language is new, but the ideas underlying the above have guided more than five years of growth for Artistry. And from the responses of arts critics (writing for the *Pioneer Press*, *Star Tribune*, *Lavender Magazine*, and others), audience members, gallery visitors, students, and the artists and community partners with whom we work, it is clear that our programming is the strongest it has ever been. It is also clear that we remain less-known than we should be in and outside of Bloomington. This lack of visibility stems from many factors, including our history as a community arts organization.

The two organizations that merged to form Artistry in 2009 were founded in 1955 and 1976 to give Bloomington residents an opportunity for creative expression, skills development, and community-building through theater, visual arts, and other disciplines. The passion and commitment of our founders is legendary, and we honor them through our hard work to remain a vibrant organization that adapts to this changing community. After more than 60 years, building a strong and vibrant social fabric through art remains a core part of what we do, and residents of all ages and backgrounds find creative expression and skill-building opportunities in our arts education programs and volunteer opportunities on and off site. In our theater and exhibitions programs, however, the opening of the regionally acclaimed Bloomington Center for the Arts has enabled Artistry to sharpen its focus on our *audiences* with work of ever-increasing artistic quality on the stages and gallery walls. From the remarkable talent of the artists we hire, to the shows we select, making artistic excellence widely accessible has become a defining quality of our programming.

For Artistry, the pursuit of artistic excellence means (1) engaging our region's most talented artists to dazzle our audiences and serve as mentors for emerging artists; (2) offering programming that seeks to entertain while also presenting food for thought, building understanding and empathy, and sparking conversation; and (3) ensuring that we reach increasingly diverse audiences in terms of age, income, and race and ethnicity. We are aware of no other arts organization outside the core cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul that produces programming of the quality and reach we do across the disciplines of theater, visual arts, and arts education. Like Bloomington, we are unique.

Our uniqueness is a challenge but an even greater opportunity. To help realize our potential, we have developed a talented team of arts leaders within our staff, most recently adding Producing Artistic Director Benjamin McGovern. A regionally respected director in his own right, Ben brings fresh energy and perspective to our theater program from a career that began with Theatre de la Jeune Lune and includes nearly five years as the artistic director of the Guthrie Theater's Dowling Studio. Through the collective power of our board and staff leadership, our expanding reach into the Twin Cities' top tier of artists, our longstanding and dedicated volunteer corps, and our growing community partnerships, Artistry is positioned as never before to capitalize on years of work to increase our regional reach and reputation.

We firmly believe that we best serve *the City of Bloomington and its residents* by advancing the mission, vision, and value of citizenship stated above. As a key partner in achieving the City's strategic priorities, a vibrant Artistry focused on artistic excellence:

- Builds Bloomington's "Community Image" as a great and distinctive place to live and work with high quality, contemporary arts experiences for people of all ages, including every student in our public schools;
- Works toward greater "Inclusion and Equity," ensuring that residents served through arts programming in the Center for the Arts and elsewhere reflect our changing demographics with respect to race, income, and other dimensions of diversity. For example, we now have partnerships with all 13 Bloomington public elementary and middle schools and numerous libraries, senior residences, organizations serving people with disabilities, etc. We also now offer Pay What You Can performances and other new ways to make sure everyone can experience the joy of live theater.

Further, as we become increasingly recognized as a regional cultural asset, we can better compete for earned revenue and philanthropic dollars from the larger base necessary to sustain program quality and diversity for our Bloomington audience.

Despite our many recent successes and a compelling vision for the future, Artistry is at a crossroads financially. It is clear that we cannot remain vibrant for our founding generation's children and grandchildren with the current mix of programming, revenue sources, and resources available for fund development, marketing, and technology.

Artistry's current business model is not sustainable. While the quality of programming we have provided for years is on par with other well respected Twin Cities arts organizations, our local/regional visibility and the share of our revenue coming from contributions lag behind. Since 2010 we have been in a rapid growth/start-up mode. Revenues grew 51% between 2010 and 2016 but costs kept pace. We have increasingly strengthened and diversified our programming and reached out to underserved audiences through schools and other partners, but we have lacked adequate capital to fund these changes and the activities necessary for long-term success: marketing and PR efforts that could introduce new audience members to our current and rapidly ageing base; identifying and soliciting new donors and encouraging more of our current donors to make major and planned gifts; and building a safety net of cash reserves.

The only way to bridge from present circumstances to a more sustainable future is to secure significant financial investment from our most important stakeholders, along with greater engagement from community leaders in our continued strategy development and implementation. Accordingly, Artistry seeks to launch the first phase of a (tentatively-titled) "Next Generations" campaign to raise

approximately \$1.5 Million in bridge funding through 2020, and to expand board and advisory group membership to include representatives from our most significant stakeholders. The funds will help us refine our current programming to maximize both mission fit and revenue potential, to explore new program and outreach approaches, to market to new audiences and expand our donor base, and to be an even closer partner of the City, the Bloomington Public Schools, and others in shared goals such as city-wide creative placemaking and high quality arts access for people of all ages and backgrounds.

Artistry is closely connected with the City by virtue of our role as the largest provider of programming in the Bloomington Center for the Arts, our creative placemaking partnership, and other ties. The City is our most important stakeholder and its participation in our bridge campaign is critical. Accordingly, we respectfully request a supplemental cultural arts grant totaling \$1,115,000 over a four-and-a-half year period to leverage additional contributions from individual, corporate, and foundation donors. We also request that a City councilmember and the City Manager or a member of his leadership team be among the group of community leaders we will ask to become ex officio members of our board of directors.

Artistry by the Numbers

2015-2016

The following figures demonstrate the scope of our programming and the large number of people we engage. All figures are for the 2016 fiscal year (July 1, 2015 - June 30, 2016), and the first two "dollars" numbers are unaudited/preliminary.

1,077,540	Dollars earned from ticket sales, class fees, sales of art, and other earned sources
689,782	Dollars and in-kind support received from institutional and individual donors
50,341	Visits inspired by exhibits in the Inez Greenberg Gallery
25,636	Tickets issued to Schneider Theater performances
8,585	Volunteer hours contributed
6,768	Children and adults served through arts education partnerships
5,313	Tickets issued to Black Box Theater performances
2,861	Season tickets issued for Schneider Theater productions
661	Registrations processed for on-site adult classes and workshops
407	Season tickets issued to Black Box Theater performances
350	Free theater tickets given to children, families + other underserved audience members
318	Registrations processed for on-site youth classes and workshops
170	Talented volunteers made our programming possible
137	Visual artists offered work for sale in the Rose Schneider Gift Shop + <i>Gifts in the Gallery</i>
131	Visual artists exhibited work in the Inez Greenberg and Atrium galleries
117	Actors brought our productions to life
70	Teaching artists nurtured and challenged students of all ages
35	Crew members and other theater contractors labored behind the scenes
32	Theater directors, designers, and choreographers led our productions
30	Musicians played the scores for our Schneider Theater musicals
14	Exhibits graced the Inez Greenberg and Atrium galleries
8	Theater productions enlivened the stages



Request for Council Action

Originator City Manager	Item City Manager Council Update
Agenda Section Organizational	Date 9/12/2016
Description	

1. Updates to Council by the City Manager

2. Council Issue Identification

Item created by:
Presenter:

Requested Action

Discussion

Attachments: